

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7363

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 05983

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, GR

SUBJECT: FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO GREECE

1. QUAI SOUTHERN EUROPEAN DEPUTY DIRECTOR GELADE BRIEFED EMBOFF MARCH 6 ON FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES' FEBRUARY 24-26 VISIT TO ATHENS. HE EMPHASIZED CONTINUITY OF FRENCH POLICY AND DENIED PRESS REPORTS THAT FRANCE IS TILTING AWAY FROM GREECE; HE INSISTED PARIS HAD ALWAYS BEEN OBJECTIVELY EVEN-HANDED BUT HAS CONSISTENTLY FELT THAT CONCESSIONS NECESSARY FOR CYPRUS SOLUTION MUST COME FROM TURKS SINCE GREEKS ARE NOT IN POSITION TO MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS. HE INSISTED THIS OUTLOOK IS UNCHANGED AND SAUVAGNARGUES' VISIT TO GREECE CERTAINLY PRESSAGES NO COOLING OF THE CONTINUED FRIENDLY FRANCO-GREEK RELATIONS. GELADE GAVE FOLLOWING IMPRESSIONS OF SAUVAGNARGUES' CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS.

2. CYPRUS BOTH BITSIOS AND SAUVAGNARGUES AGREED THAT CYPRUS SOLUTION SHOULD BE SOUGHT IN INTER-COMMUNITY TALKS. BITSIOS ASKED FOR FRENCH DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT FOR
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INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THESE TALKS BY PUTTING THEM

IN NEW YORK UNDER UNSYG WALDHEIM. THEY AGREED SOME NEW FORMAT WAS NEEDED FOR TALKS. GELADE ADDED THAT FRENCH HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY MAKARIOS' RECENT PROPOSALS WHICH REPRESENT HIS FIRST ACCEPTANCE OF A GEOGRAPHIC FEDERATION. GELADE SAID THAT BITSIOS HAD IMPLIED (BUT NOT STATED) THAT BIREGIONALISM IS NOT EXCLUDED AS LONG AS TURKEY WOULD SETTLE FOR SMALLER AREA.

3. NATO. BITSIOS HAD UNDERLINED GREECE'S CONTINUING ALIGNMENT WITH THE WEST. HE SAID ATHENS IS REVIEWING ITS MILITARY COMMITMENTS TO NATO AND THE US SO AS TO PUT THEM ON A BASIS OF GREEK NATIONAL INTERESTS. FRENCH CONCLUSION IS THAT OUTCOME OF THIS REVIEW, FOR BOTH US BASES AND NATO WILL DEPEND ON HOW KARAMANLIS' GOVERNMENT FARES IN ITS MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY ENDEAVORS; IF IT SUFFERS REVERSES IN OTHER AREAS, GOG WILL HAVE TO MAKE SACRIFICES TOWARDS PUBLIC OPINION AT THE EXPENSE OF NATO AND US.

4. EC. FRANCE AGREED TO SUPPORT GREEK DESIRES FOR SPEEDING UP ACCESS TO FULL MEMBERSHIP BY END OF THIS DECADE. SAUVAGNARGUES EMPHASIZED THAT FRANCE IS ONLY ONE OF EC-9 AND THAT GREEK ACCESSION TO COMMON MARKET POSES COMPLEX ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

5. OTHER SUBJECTS. SAUVAGNARGUES AVOIDED COMMITMENT ON GOG DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN PRODUCER/CONSUMER ENERGY CONFERENCE. REGARDING ME, GOG ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO AUTONOMY FOR JERUSALEM HOLY PLACES. BITSIOS REPORTED FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RELATIONS WITH BULGARIA, WHICH SAID THERE IS NO PROBLEM OF BULGARIAN MINORITY IN GREECE, AND WITH YUGOSLAVIA, WHICH HAS REFRAINED FROM RAISING MACEDONIAN PROBLEM.

6. SUMMING UP, GELADE DESCRIBED VISIT AS ROUTINE BUT USEFUL, AND GOOD BASIS FOR FORTHCOMING EXCHANGE OF VISITS BETWEEN PRESIDENTS GISCARD AND KARAMANLIS, THE DATES OF WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN SET. CURRENT PLANNING IS FOR GISCARD TO VISIT GREECE NEXT JUNE OR OCTOBER.
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